

NSC BRIEFING

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NO CHANGE IN CLASS.

17 March 1954

PROBABLE FRENCH REACTION TO FALL OF DI

BIEN PHU.

DECLASSIFIED TO: TS
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 17 March 1954
AUTH: HR 70-2

DATE 1-3-80 REVIEWER: []

- I. Assembly pressure for immediate negotiated settlement with Ho would assume critical proportions.
- II. In any event, greatly increased demand for solution at Geneva.
 1. Greater pressure for American concessions to Communist China/because French military position weaker.
- III. Intensified pressure for UN or US military intervention, if Geneva fails.
- IV. Some qualified American observers expect Laniel to fall immediately if Dien Bien Phu is lost, because of pressures listed above.
- V. Nevertheless, Laniel government would probably survive because:
 1. Imminence of Geneva talks
 - a. Laniel bluffed assembly before

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Berlin conference on threat
of difficulty in forming
new government.

b. ~~There is now definite hope of
solution at Geneva.~~

2. Present pro-EDC majority in
Assembly would try to retain Laniel
believing it impossible to form
government if Laniel falls now.
3. Fall of Laniel could precipitate
elections under 18-month clause
in constitution.

Hope of solution at Geneva definite
in comparison with pre-Berlin
situation.

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I. Vietnamese fears of ultimate Communist victory will be sharply aggravated by fall of French strongpoint.

1. Reaction will be compounded by knowledge of effect of loss in France.
2. Supporters of Bao Dai government will diminish to negligible group.
3. Anti-Communist Vietnamese look to US as only effective source of support.

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